

Set up an executive steering board to lead strategy governance

Strategy governance, led by an executive steering board, defines how strategy roadmap decisions are made to align ServiceNow functionality to business outcomes. Start by defining who must be involved in strategic roadmap decisions for ServiceNow, then define how this group makes informed decisions.

Check your progress:

- Do you have a group of leaders who meet periodically to make strategic decisions to use ServiceNow to support desired business outcomes at your organization?
- Does this group have a defined remit that bounds what types of decisions they need to be involved in?
- Does this group apply a consistent decision-making process?

If you did not answer “yes” to all questions above, complete these action steps:

1. Recruit your executive sponsor to chair the executive steering board.

Establish an executive steering board, led by the executive sponsor, to oversee strategy governance.

2. Set a charter for you executive steering board.

We recommend that this board aspire to:

- Drive success of the ServiceNow program by aligning and prioritizing investments with business goals and available delivery capabilities
- Monitor and direct programs to protect benefits and mitigate program risks
- Be accountable for the ServiceNow program, projects, and roadmap

3. Work with your executive sponsor to recruit other stakeholders to the board.

One of the most important steps in establishing strategy governance is to define who needs to be directly involved in decision-making processes that determine how your organization will use and govern ServiceNow. Take great care when you select who should participate in these decisions. Keep the board as small as possible to start.

Consider asking the following roles to participate in executive steering board decision-making:

- Executive sponsor
- CIO/CTO
- Key suppliers and partners
- Business unit/department representatives
- Vendor managers



4. Define what decisions and responsibilities need to be managed by the executive steering board.

Consider what outcomes you expect from your board. Then make a list of decisions and actions that your executive steering board will be responsible for.

To start, here are the most important decisions the executive steering board needs to make:

- Does the current ServiceNow roadmap align with your business objectives?
- How will we revisit and update the ServiceNow vision and roadmap over time?
- Do we have the right partners and partner management in place?

Here's an example of how you can structure what you define, using a template we've used while working with other customers. Note that the output of action steps 1–3 can also be included in this template.

Executive Steering Board

Charter	Members	Responsibilities & Decisions	Outcomes	Typical Agenda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive success of the ServiceNow program by aligning and prioritizing investments with business goals and available delivery capabilities. • Monitor and direct programs to protect benefits, and mitigate program risks. • Accountable for the ServiceNow program, projects, and roadmap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ServiceNow executive sponsor (lead) • Platform owner • Business unit executives (live processes & current projects) • Project manager(s) (current projects) • Process manager(s) • Platform architect <p>Optional / guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality manager • Compliance & audit • Enterprise architect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving success of the ServiceNow program by aligning and prioritizing demand with business goals and available delivery capabilities • Resolve escalations and conflicts of interests • Ensure project dependencies are identified and shared among the projects • Optimize risk position • Oversee & direct benefits realization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned roadmap • Aligned release schedule • Release schedule approvals • Release prioritization • Approve enhancements • Approve "platform architecture board recommendations • Aligned project dependencies • Platform upgrade alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy & demand review • Alignment and prioritization of platform strategy & projects • Project(s) status • Project(s) planning alignment • Capacity review • Release schedule approval • Enhancements review & approval

5. Set a cadence for executive steering board meetings.

We recommend that the executive steering board meet once every 3-6 months, at least.



Practitioner insight: Be mindful not to rely only on a cadence of governance board meetings to provide effective governance.

Cadence doesn't structure what decisions are made or how they are made. Focus on defining how to support the decision-making process that those boards should follow.

6. Define specifically how the executive steering board will make decisions.

Define a process for how your board will make governance decisions. Make sure your process explicitly prioritizes the most important action items from your backlog.

Consider whether decisions are made by majority-rules voting, consensus, seniority, or some other mechanism.

7. Plan how to support your executive steering board's decision-making.

It isn't enough to simply get the right leaders in the same room. You need to plan for how you will prepare your board to focus on the right priorities when they meet. Plan for how you can do the following items before and during each board meeting:

- Set an agenda. Maintain a backlog of the items that your board needs to discuss during their next meeting. Prioritize these items to ensure that the most important and urgent needs are addressed.
- Provide relevant information so your board can make informed decisions. For the executive steering board, this information can include the:
 - Most up-to-date ServiceNow vision, business case, program plan, and roadmap
 - Most up-to-date ServiceNow performance dashboard reports
 - Notes from past board meetings, including those from other boards (i.e., the demand board and/or technical governance board)
- Take meeting notes to record decisions made by the board so they can be articulated into policies that your organization can follow, as needed.